

For Immediate Release  
Monday, Dec. 19, 2005

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## **GOVERNOR GREGOIRE: RESTORE AND PROTECT PUGET SOUND**

*Governor announces targeted investment, names public-private partnership*

SEATTLE – Governor Chris Gregoire today said she will designate \$42 million to restore and protect Puget Sound. She also named a panel of Washingtonians to study clean-up efforts across the country and make recommendations about further clean-up efforts.

“Cleaning and protecting Puget Sound must be at the top of our state agenda,” said Governor Gregoire. “But I know from experience that state government can’t do it alone.”

Gov. Gregoire said the health of the sound is critical to the state economy and the environment. The investment in clean-up is one targeted investment in a legislative package that includes investments in early learning, school standards and alternative energy. She has said that, in addition to strategic spending now, she will reserve some money for education and health care initiatives in the next two years to provide stability and avoid tax increases.

“We owe it to taxpayers to manage the state budget like a family budget,” the Governor said. “That means paying the bills, making sure our kids have opportunities to succeed in school and saving in case money gets tight.”

### **TARGETED INVESTMENTS**

The Governor’s legislative package provides \$42 million from existing, and available revenue sources to: clean up toxic sites; prevent oil spills and continuing toxic contamination; restore near-shore, estuary and salmon habitats; help homeowners with Sound clean-up; make state parks and other state facilities more environmentally sound, beginning with wastewater and sewer projects at six marine state parks.

The Governor introduced the Washingtonians who have agreed to serve on the Puget Sound Partnership.

“I am charging the Puget Sound Partnership with engaging a broad cross-section of agencies, tribes and citizens to develop recommendations for me, the Legislature, and Congress for preserving the health and ecosystem of Puget Sound, and to help educate and enlist the public in achieving recovery of the Sound by 2020,” the Governor said.

Governor Gregoire said that the effort will also depend on the help of the federal government.

U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks, whose congressional district includes Hood Canal and South Puget Sound, said, "The time has come to save Puget Sound and Hood Canal, and I am very excited that the Governor has decided to tackle this issue head-on. I am confident that through hard work and dedication to a single vision we can save the Sound and Canal for our children and grandchildren. I look forward to working with our delegation and doing my part in Congress to ensure that these national treasures are protected and restored."

"In the Northwest, we recognize that environmental stewardship of our waterways and coastline and the strength of our economy are naturally intertwined," said U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), top Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee's Fisheries & Coast Guard panel. "Washington State has many diverse needs as a coastal state where maritime trade fuels our economy and coastal waters are a key to our region's character and quality of life. I'm confident that the Puget Sound Partnership will be a powerful ally in the fight in Washington, D.C. to protect and save our Sound for many years to come."

#### **PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP**

Serving with Governor Gregoire on the Puget Sound Partnership are: Salmon Recovery Funding Board Chair **William Ruckelshaus**; U.S. Rep. **Dicks**; Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chairman **Billy Frank, Jr.**; **Colin Moseley**, President, Green Diamond Company and Chairman, Simpson Resource Company; King County Executive **Ron Sims**; University of Washington President **Mark Emmert**, Ph.D.; Western Washington Agricultural Association Executive Director **Mike Shelby**; Taylor Shellfish Farms Vice President **Bill Taylor**; and People for Puget Sound Executive Director **Kathy Fletcher**.

The Puget Sound Partnership will learn and use what has worked at other large ecosystem protection efforts around the country, and will engage an extensive cross-section of Washington citizens, business and governments in recommending how to improve protection and recovery of Puget Sound and Hood Canal. Initial recommendations are expected by June 15, 2006.

Executive Sims said, "The Governor challenged us to be bold and action-oriented, and to that, we say: Governor, we are ready for that challenge. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that this is our generation's responsibility and that we must act now."

Salmon Funding Board chairman Ruckelshaus said, "All of us share the amenities of Puget Sound. They will not be sustained unless all of us pull together in their preservation. People and organizations must be involved in designing the solutions so they have ownership and the commitment to move forward."

Fisheries Commission Chairman Frank said, "The treaty Indian tribes in western Washington strongly support the Governor's initiative to clean up Puget Sound. A healthy Puget Sound is essential to wild salmon recovery and the quality of life for everyone who lives here. Puget Sound is our home. Together, we can protect and restore it for future generations."

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